

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters](#)

Pension application of Jonas Johnston (Johnson) W21470 Esther fn255NC
Transcribed by Will Graves 10/28/08 supp 10/29 rev'd 3/2/11

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Also, the handwriting of the original scribes often lends itself to varying interpretations. Users of this database are urged to view the original and to make their own decision as to how to decipher what the original scribe actually wrote. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. Folks are free to make non-commercial use this transcript in any manner they may see fit, but please extend the courtesy of acknowledging the transcriber—besides, if it turns out the transcript contains mistakes, the resulting embarrassment will fall on the transcriber. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading fails to catch all misinterpretations. I welcome and encourage folks to call those and any other errors to my attention.]

[fn p. 3]

To the Honorable William L. Marcy Secretary of War

On behalf of the Distributees of the late Mrs. Ester Johnson widow of Colonel Jonas Johnson of the Revolutionary Army, this case has been again carried before the Commissioner of Pensions upon new evidence, and rejected by him; An appeal is respectfully passed or from his decision to you.

This case has been allowed for heretofore, for six months service, and that for the last six months service rendered by Col Johnson immediately preceding his Death. He died in service on the 29th day of July 1779 on Drowning Creek in South Carolina on his march Home.

The Commissioner admits that Col. Johnson was appointed a Major in Edgecombe County on the 22nd of April 1776. And Mrs. Ester Johnson his widow, in her Declaration for a pension declares her Husband entered the Army as a Captain. Thomas Bentley¹ a Revolutionary Pensioner proves that Col. Johnson served at Wilmington, and in that section of country from March to October 1776. John Bryan² another Revolutionary Pensioner proves the same service. Henry Barnwill [sic, Barnhill]³ another Revolutionary Pensioner proves the same service. Also Micajah Pettaway⁴ & Dr. Robert Williams⁵ two other Revolutionary Pensioners, and Mrs. Catharine Johnson, all prove in part the same service. This evidence also well supported for credibility has all been rejected by the Commissioner & set aside. To fortify this Parole Testimony, in behalf of the Claimants, I adduce the certificate of the Comptroller of North Carolina which is on file, showing that in "a Book of Settlement of the Army of towns at Kingston, the name of Col. Jonas Johnson is associated with the name of Henry Horn, and that they have received for their services, and for purchasing of Guns in Edgecombe County the sum of £376.15.5 dated November 1776. We claimed that so much of this some of money as paid Col. Johnson for his Military services as Major as testified to by the foregoing witnesses from March to November 1776 was his in that character. And which proves his length of service

¹ [Thomas Bently \(Bentley\) S8063](#)

² [FPA W9747](#)

³ [Henry Barnhill S6579](#)

⁴ [Micajah Pettaway \(Petway, Pettway\) S3668](#)

⁵ [Robert Williams S7922](#)

between those states to have been 8 months. The balance of this sum was paid to Henry Horn, and for arms. The Comptroller further certifies that Col. Johnson received for himself and for others for their services in November 1777 the sum of £129.9.7. He also certifies that other sums of money were paid to Colonel Johnson in 1778 and 1779, many of them large showing his great connection with Military service in North Carolina. The Testimony in the case does not sufficiently locate those particular sums, to specified service, though they all imply it, too strong to be doubted. But the Parole Evidence for the Pro rata of service, to meet these various sums and payments is to be found in general terms, in the depositions of Mrs. Catharine Johnson, Doctor Robert Williams and in the Declaration of Mrs. Ester Johnson for her Pension. What portion of service Colonel Johnson rendered between his tour to Wilmington and his tour to South Carolina, where he died, embracing and pertaining to these various psalms, and what portion of these various psalms he received for his services, can only be left to liberal estimation, as the Commissioner admits Colonel Johnson to have been a very meritorious officer.

According to the Parole Evidence, as well as the Recorded proves in this case, it is very evident that Colonel Jonas Johnson served as a Captain a Major & a Colonel in the Revolutionary war for the full period of 18 months. Six months of which have been allowed & paid for. Leaving one years pay due.

Similar recorded proofs to this, in the case of Colonel Johnson from the Comptroller of North Carolina showing from his Books these statements have governed the Commissioner heretofore in allowing the claims for a Pension to the widows of Colonel James McKizzie [?] of Arkansas formerly of North Carolina and these proofs have directed him, in very many other cases to allow the claims. It is much to be regretted then, that his departure, should now appear, not allowing him to apply the same just rule in the case of the widow of Col. Jonas Johnson, who he has in his various occasions often admitted, to have been an officer of great merit. I hope the decision will be reversed, as made by the commissioner, and the claim for one year further Pension may be allowed.

I have the Honor to be most respectfully

Your very Humble Servt.

S/ Jno D. Hawkins

In behalf of the Distributees of Mrs. Ester Johnson

[fn p. 7]

State of North Carolina, Edgecombe County

On this 23rd day of November 1839, personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace for the County of Edgecombe Mrs. Esther Johnston of the County now in the 89th year of her age, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth, on her oath, make the following declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the act of Congress passed July 4th, 1836: That she is the widow of Colonel Jonas Johnston who entered the service of the State of North Carolina in the year 1776 as a Captain for Edgecombe County and by a reorganization of the Troops my husband was made a Major of the County in the same year, in a short time after he was raised to the rank of Colonel of Edgecombe. My husband was actively engaged from the commencement of the revolution in service both in this State and the State of South Carolina up to the last of the month of July 1779 at which time he died on Drowning Creek at the house of Thomas Amis⁶ on the South Carolina line he being on his return from the

⁶ Jamie Blackwell points out that this is very likely a reference to Thomas Ames, the proprietor of Ames Mill, which was located just north of present day Fair Bluff, North Carolina.

Army in South Carolina as will more fully appear by his letters of that period filed as evidence. She declares that her husband Colonel Jonas Johnston was on two occasions in service in the State of South Carolina comprising in all not less than 8 or 9 months. In the second expedition which was commenced in February 1779 and terminated with his death at Drowning Creek on the 29th day of July of the same year -- She his widow reaching the place a few days previous to his death.

She further declares that she was married at the house of Aquilla Sugg in Edgecombe County on the 17th day of November 1768, that her husband the aforesaid Colonel Jonas Johnston died as before stated on the 29th day of July 1779; and that she has remained a widow ever since that period; as will more fully appear by reference to the proof hereto annexed.

S/ Easther Johnston, X her mark

[fn p. 8]

State of North Carolina, Edgecombe County

This day personally appeared before me a justice of the peace for the County above written Mrs. Easther Johnston of the said County who subscribed & sworn to the foregoing declaration in due form of law. I also certify that the family Bible of Colonel Jonas Johnston and his wife Mrs. Easther Johnston has been produced to me and I have cut from it the record of the births of their children and attached it to this declaration by 3 seals. I have had also produced to me the only remaining papers of Colonel Johnston to throw light on his revolutionary services; which comprises six letters written by Colonel Johnson [sic] to his wife while in service in South Carolina in which I have placed in an envelope sealed, with my name on it -- The commissions and other papers of Colonel Johnson his widow declares have been long since destroyed by moths and were burnt not knowing they would be of service. I also certify that the very enfeebled state of Mrs. Johnston's health and her blindness prevent her from attendance at a Court. I also certify that she has produced to me an entry in a family book of the period of the death of Colonel Jonas Johnston which is in the proper handwriting of Colonel Amos Johnston the Brother of Colonel Jonas Johnston -- which I have also affixed to this declaration by 3 seals. Given under my hand and seal this 23rd day of November 1839.

S/ Jno F. Hughes, JP

[fn p. 9]

The Ages of Jonas Johnston

And Esther his Wife Children

Selah Johnston was born the 25 day of May in the year 1770

Elisabeth Maund Johnston Was Born the 9th Day of February In the Year 1772

Prudence Johnston was Born The 15th Day of March in the Year 1775

Mary Johnston was born the 30 Day of December in the Year 1776

William Johnston was Born the 24th Day of February 1779

Set Down by John Chitty

Jonas Johnston Son of Jacob Johnston and Mary his wife Died July 29th 1779

Jacob Johnston Father of Jonas Johnston and husband of Mary Johnston Died the 11th Day of December 1781

William Johnston Son of Jonas Johnston and Esther his Wife Died on Thursday the 7th Day of Novr. 1793

[fn. 51

North Carolina

Monday, August 21st, 1775

At a General meeting of the Delegates of the Inhabitants of this Province, at Hillsboro the 21st day of August A.D. 1775 aforesaid. A majority appearing, continued their meetings from day-to-day until the 10th day of September 1775.

Thursday September 7th, 1775

The Report of the Committee, appointed to bring in a plan for regulating Minute men and Militia being taken into consideration.

Resolved that -- the Province be divided into 6 Districts, as they stood hereto fore under the Superior Court-Law, viz., at Edenton, Halifax, Hillsboro, Wilmington, New Bern and Salisbury Districts. That a Battalions consisting of 10 Companies of 50 men rank and file, each, be raised in each District; and a Colonel, Lieutenant-Colonel, Major, ten Captains, ten Lieutenants, ten Ensigns, ten Sergeants, ten Drummers and ten Fifers be allowed for each Battalion. That the Field Officers for each and every Battalion be recommended by the several Districts, and appointed by the Congress, and that the number of men to be enlisted in the several Counties in the different Districts be also recommended by the several Districts, as nearly as may be the number of effective men in each County. That the Field Officers in each District appoint a suitable person or persons in each County to enlist-minute man, which said minute men, when their Companies are compleated shall choose their Captains, Lieutenants in Ensigns, and the said Captains Lieutenants and Ensigns of each Company shall appoint the respective non-commissioned Officers, That -- when any Company is compleated, and the officers chosen, the Captain shall give notice to the Chairman of the County Committee, who shall thereupon called the Committee together to review the said Company, at such place as the Chairman shall think proper. And the Committee or a majority of them, finding the Company compleat with able and proper men, shall grant a Certificate thereof to the Captain. That -- the minute men so enlisted for 6 months, and whenever called into actual service, be subject -- and bound by the rules and regulations for the Continental Army provided by the Continental Congress; That -- in case of Insurrections, Invasions or other emergency such Captain or Captains, as may be nearest to the scene of action or first informed of the danger, shall have power to order all or part of his or their man as may be necessary into immediate service, and shall give notice to be Colonel or Commanding Officer of the Battalion to which he or they belonged, and the Colonel or Commanding Officer shall upon such information from a Captain or in the first instance have power to order all or every part of the Battalion as he shall think proper into service, and marched them to any part of his District, but he shall give notice to the Committee of Safety of his District, and shall be subject to their orders when convened. But as soon as the provincial council shall meet the power of the Committees of Safety shall cease, with respect to such Battalion, in the Colonel or Commanding Officer thereof, shall be subject to the control of said Council.

[cover: fn. 39: "Jonas Johnston to Gor. [Governor] Caswell May [sic, June] 1777 To His Excelency [Excellency] Ritchard [Richard] Caswell Esqmiar [Esquire] Capt. Generall [General] of the State of North Carrilina [Carolina]]
Edgecombe County June the 13 day 1777

To His Excelency the Govner [governor] and gentill Men [gentlemen] of the Councill [council] at State—

Sir this is to inform your Exetincy [Excellency] and gentill men at the Councill [Council] that about 10 days ago Colenal [Colonel] Jurdin [? Jordan?] returned a List of dessarters [deserters] numbered in This County when I Imediatety [immediately] Issued Orders to Every Captain in the County to Search their dustricts [districts] for the same amongst [amongst] howme [whome] was Tristem Noswary [Tristan Norsworthy?] and Matha Joiner [Matthew Joiner, Joyner ?] who did not consider Them sulves [themselves] as dessarters for the reasons shore [shared] In by dissistions [desertions] hearing in Closed [enclosed] But Came to orth [?] with and surendered [surrendered] them sutves [themselves] to me and only Beged [begged] it as usoven [?] of me to Lay ustate [? the state] of thenir [their?] case Be foar [before] you Excelency and Councill and what ever is dutermined [determined] on they will rust [rest] perfectly satisfied with and shoould [should] it Be the Sence [Sense] of your Excelency and Councill for them to rurne [return] or not to rurne to their ridgemunt [regiment] you will be kinde [kind] unufe [enough] to Lut [Let] me know that I may know how to proseed [proceed] with them and so no more at prusent [present] But Sir I Still remain yours Excelency and the Honerabell [Honorable] Councills moste [most] obudent [obedient] Humbell [humble] Servant

S/ Jonas Johnston



[cover: fn. p. 36: "To Excelency Rich'd Caswell Governor of No Carolina This For favor of Mr. Bignal" "a Letter from Mr. Jonas Johnston 11th June 1778"]

Edgecomb [Edcombe] County June 11th 1778

May it please Your Excelency [Excellency] these Fieus [few] Lines Comes to Inform You that ON 14th of May We Raised Our Coto [? Quota?] of Men for this County 33 as Voluntears (Volunteers) The Others Ware [were] Balleded [balloted?] and pointed Out by the Field Officers and Are Nearly Ready to march Nothing more will Detain them Over 5 or 6 Days then [than] the Lack of Mony [money] to pay them their Bounty which I Hope Your Excelency Can Furnish me with and If in your power Sir & Plase [please] to Send it by Mr. Robert Bidgnal Esqr. The whole Amount if I am Not Mistaken is Just 4800 Dolars [dollars] Your Excelency Comploying [complying] with the Above Request will be Thankfully Acknowledge [acknowledged] by Your Most Obedient Friend and most Humbl Sert

S/ Jonas Johnston

[cover: fn. p. 32: "Excelency Rich'd Caswell Governor of Nth Carolina"]

Edgecomb [Edgecombe] County, may it please your Excelency [Excellency] Sir these Fieu [Few] Lines will inform you that on 23rd of this Instant Our Detachment Marched for Halifax all in High Spirits I have payed [paid] them their Bounty to a man the mony [money] I Borrowed at my own Risk Under And Expectation of Rescvg [Receiving? or Reserving?] of it when Mr Bignal Returned But he Informed me that the mony was not Come from the Northward and further, Informed me that Your Excelency and Council had Given the pay Masters a Draught on the Treasury for the Bounty of the Several Countys [counties] But as I have Payed my men at my own Risk and my Honour is now at Stake for the mony as I Borrowed it of Gentailmen [Gentlemen] whome [whom] will want it Shortly and if Your Excelency fail Sending it to me I

must Either Forfeit my honour Or Send [?] my Own Estate and Yesterday Recerved [Received] a Letter from Mr. Bignal that Capt. Blunt [Blount] was Returned with mony from the Northward from Your Ever Readiness to Serve the publick [public] the best Advantage and not to Let the Inocent [Innocent] Suffer with the Gilty [Guilty] I Hope if it is not quite Inconsistant [Inconsistent] with Your Duty you will Send me the Money by the Barer Mr. Richard Tomlinson and his Rec^t [receipt] Shall be Good Against me for what Ever Sum Your Excelency Please to Send in my Last to You I stated The whole Amount at 4800 Dollars but one of our men Died Before he Rec^d his Bounty so that 4750 will be the sum Now I Know my Enemise [Enemies] would Regoice [Rejoice] to See me fail Gitting [getting] the mony So that Either my Honour or Small Fortune might Sink as they Last weak [week] Failed in their Attempt Not withstanding their Great paines [pains] and another Lye bill [libel?] as Abominal [Abominable] as the Other, A Ballance [balance] of 72 Votes in my favour [favor] my all is Now at Stake and if I fail Gitting the mony Great Youse [use] will be maid [made] to my Hurt Both of Honour and Estate Sir, I am Your Excelency's Most Obedient Humb^l [humble] Servt [servant]
June 26th 1778 S/ Jonas Johnston

Dr. Sir Kingston 27 June 1778

Your favor of yesterday I have now before me, and confess I am under very great concern that it not being in my power to furnish the money you mention, for to my very great astonishment, this day Captain Blount returned with only Forty Thousand pounds which will not pay half of the bounty of the Men raised in consequence of the late Act of Assembly -- I should rejoice in having it in my power to serve you, but in the present case, I could not acquit myself in my Own Judgment, was I to give a preference; I shall therefore keep the money in my possession until the meeting of the Council, which is appointed to meet here on Thursday next, when, I would advise you to attend with your receipts or other Vouchers to shew you have paid the bounty to your Men & have no doubt you will receive it.

I congratulate you on your late Election and am with esteem
Sir

Your most Obedt Sert

Col. Jonas Johnston

[cover: fn. p. 41 "To Esther Johnston"]

Camp nuar [near] Camden on the Wateree

Loving Wife thus [this] coms [comes] to lut [let] you knew [know] that I am in perfict [perfect] Health at presant [present] and So is all My Men Excpt [except] John Mcdnewl [John McDowell?] who is Sick with the pluncey [?] I visited hem [him] yaster day [yesterday] in the Evinning [evening] and red and Ens to March to Augusta [Augusta] and Be Stationed [?] Their [there] as the Govner [Governor] of South Carolina Considers [?] It will be Most "Agreeable [agreeable] to our Men to Take post in that quarter I am well pleased at the Station as I hope it is Healthy I am as well satisfied as I Can be at So Greate [great] a distance from you and my Children I larned [learned?] the Line of This State the Tenth day of Aprill [April] with Erring [Erwin?] and of Corse [course] shall be discharged The Seventh day of July I shall Make utt [out?] the [??] reach home in my power it is youse Less [useless] for me to mention any thing of My private a fairs [affairs] as I know not how they Sand [stand?] [?] Should be glad to have my [??] as soone [soon] as posuBell [possible] we have [?] the Enemy in the Late Engagements with Vevery [very] Small Loss it may Be relied on as a fact as one of our Men is hear [here] that

rec'd a slite [slight] wound in the action the peopele [people] of this state air [are] Turning out all most [almost] to a Man I Hope the Men with me will not be Quieted as Some have Been Be four [before] and so no Mour [more] at present But hope this will find you and My littell [little] Children in purfect [perfect] health and remember My Love So you My [text missing-- paper torn] nd [indecipherable text]

S/ [J]onas Johnston

[Cover: fn 46: "His Excellency Richard Caswell Governor of North Carolina" -- fn. p. 43—written in a different hand—appears to be the hand of a private secretary—much more legible than letters written in Johnston's own handwriting.]

Camp at Mr. Summers a plantation 23 miles westward of Charleston June 6th, 1779
May it please your Excellency

I am very sorry to inform you of the unhappy Situation of myself & Regiment being very poorly supplied by the Inhabitants of this State & numbers of the men have not a Shelling to procure the least necessary for themselves I am also very sorry to inform you that I am thoroughly sensible of my inabilities in a Military Capacity and find the same misfortune prevails in those of a higher Rank of our own State which in my opinion is one Reason why our men are not treated as well as they otherways [sic] might have been, notwithstanding our men remain in high Spirits and are determined to be victorious in the attempt if they engage, they have performed wonders in the Eyes of Spectators & believe them to be equal to any militia on the Continent, the Enemy have posted themselves on John's & James' Islands where they have fortified themselves as well that I believe it would be impossible to force them from their lines without loss of a Great many men, we are now within six or eight miles of their lines & at different times have Retaken a Thousand Negroes a number of prisoners & about Four Hundred Horses without the loss of but very few men, & am convinced the Safety of this State depends on the Spirited exertions of our own & believe if there is not men Sent from there to Supply our place Our State will become the Barriers [?] I still Remain with you Respect

Yr. Excellency's most Humble Servant

S/ Jonas Johnston

[fn p. 56]

State of North Carolina, Pitt County

The amended affidavit of Mr John Bryan taken to explain & prove more fully the service stated by him in his former affidavit which he rendered under Colonel Jonas Johnston. This affiant being first duly sworn according to law testifies and says. That he is informed that his evidence is objected to first, because he did not state the service he rendered under Colonel Johnston in his own declaration; and secondly that he was too young to have served at that time. When this affiant applied for a Pension he was then and has continued up to the present time to be deprived of the use of his legs by palsy: so as to be confined to the house and unable to get from a chair without assistance. In that situation this affiant could not procure evidence to establish all the service he performed; and the only reason why his services are stated in his former affidavit under Colonel Johnston was not mentioned was that Colonel Johnston being dead and this affiant not knowing any person then alive who could prove it, he was told it would not be allowed. This affiant got two persons to prepare his papers & he has every right to believe that great injustice has been done to him by their ignorance. First in stating his age & secondly in omitting to state all the service he rendered -- When this affiant went into service in 1776

under Colonel Johnston this affiant was 18 years old, and if it is made to appear by his declaration that he was not so, the person who sat the date down certainly made a mistake. My father in his lifetime had a record of the ages of his children & he told me that I was born on the 26th day of May 1758 and I am now Eighty two years of age. My friends Major Anderson and Dr Williams both of whom I served with both know that I was in service and old enough. I served with Dr Williams he being a surgeon immediately after the defeat of General Gates in and near Charlotte in this State for 3 months. In conclusion this affiant solemnly declares that he did serve under Colonel Johnston as stated in his first affidavit -- and any statement going to disprove it is certainly wrong.

Given under my hand this 15th day of April 1840.

S/ John Bryan



[fn p. 58]

State of North Carolina, Pitt County

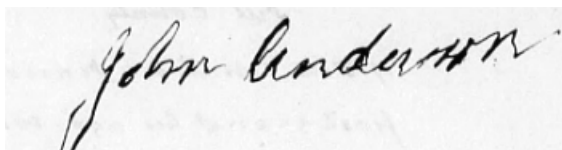
The affidavit of Major John Anderson⁷ of Pitt County & a Pensioner of the United States now in the 81st year of his age: who being first duly sworn according to law testifies and says. That he was at the Battle of Moore's Creek in the minute service and on his return home he enlisted as a regular soldier under Captain Enloe of the 5th Regiment: commanded by Colonel Buncombe and continued in the Continental service until February 1780. He then returned home, and in 1780 immediately after the defeat of General Gates this affiant served a Tour of duty with John Bryan for 3 months in or near Charlotte in this State and in 1781 I served another tour of duty for 3 months in or near Wilmington & Smithville [sic, Smithfield?] with John Bryan.

This affiant is told that the testimony of Mr Brian is objected to first because he was too young to serve; and secondly that he did not claim in his own declaration the service rendered under Colonel Johnston -- as above stated I marched to the North & continued there until February 1780. I cannot therefore speak of this service rendered by Mr Brian under Colonel Johnston of my own knowledge but I am as well convinced he did serve it as I can be of any fact whatever. Because I know when on the expedition to Charlotte he frequently mentioned it; and from that time to the present I have always heard him tell the same story. I have also heard others who served with Bryan under Colonel Jonas Johnston often mentioned the same service that Bryan was in it. In relation to the age of Mr Brian I have to said that his father and mine resided in 2 1/2 miles of each other I have known him from my infancy; it is certainly wrong that he was not old enough to serve at that time he has mentioned. I know that he was not only old above but did serve; and if any person has made him out to young I again repeat it is wrong for he is to my knowledge about my age I do not think there can be more than a years difference if that. In conclusion this affiant says that John Bryan was a good soldier, and always sustained a good character. At the time I gave evidence to establish his claim to a pension, he did most certainly mention his service under Colonel Johnston and if it is not mentioned in his declaration, it was either of omitted from negligence or not stated to calls no direct proof was none to establish it.

Given under my hand this 17th day of April 1840

S/ John Anderson

⁷ [John Anderson S6511](#)



[fn p. 60]

State of North Carolina Pitt County

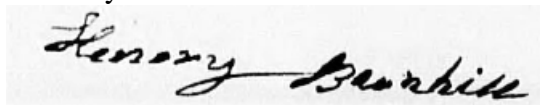
The affidavit of Mr Henry Barnhill of Pitt County a Pensioner of the United States now in the 83rd year of his age, who being first duly sworn according to law testifies and says. That he entered the service in 1776 under Captain James Armstrong and marched to Fayetteville and was at the Battle of the widow Moore's Creek; and on his return to Pitt he was mustered into the minute service and marched for Wilmington where this affiant served for 6 months from March to October of 1776. While in Wilmington this affiant well knew Major Jonas Johnston and this affiant served under him a part of the time.

This affiant was born & raised in the same neighborhood with Mr John Bryan and he can testify that Mr Bryan is quite as old a man as he is; he can also testify that at the time that this affiant was in service in 1776 Mr Brian was not only old enough but actually served. This affiant well remembers his serving in South Carolina. On the return of this affiant from Wilmington he enlisted in the service as a 9 months man & marched to the North under the command of Captain Childs and Colonel Hogan [sic, James Hogun].

In conclusion this affiant knows if it is made to appear that Mr Brian was too young to be in service at the time mentioned, it is certainly wrong. This affiant has known Mr Brian man & boy all his life and he does not believe him capable of making a misstatement in a word he is a man of truth & good character.

Given under my hand this 16th day of April 1840

S/ Henry Barnhill



[fn p. 62]

State of North Carolina, Pitt County

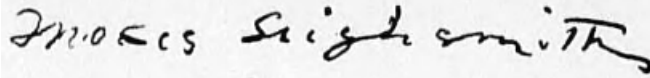
The affidavit of Mister Moses Highsmith⁸ of Pitt County a Pensioner of the United States now in the 82nd year of his age. This affiant being first duly sworn according to law testifies and says. That he was born and raised in the same neighborhood with Mr John Bryan and can testify to the fact that he served for several years in the war of the Revolution. The first service he rendered I well recollect was at Wilmington at the commencement of the War; and I have often heard him mention Colonel Johnston as the officer he served under. I have a perfect recollection of his leaving home when he marched from Tarboro for Wilmington and I know he was again in service in South Carolina and at the Battle of Stono. This affiant has been requested to state the age of Mr Bryan; he is informed that it is doubted if he was old enough to serve as stated above I have lived near to Mr Bryan man and boy all my life and from my own age in my knowledge of his I am fully convinced indeed I know that he is an older man than I am -- in this affiant then & does testify that to his knowledge Mr Bryan rendered the service above mentioned -- and if it is made to appear that he was too young to serve at the commencement of the Revolution; it is

⁸ [Moses Highsmith W7752](#)

certainly wrong: for I know he was and did serve.

Given under my hand this 16th day of April 1840.

S/ Moses Highsmith

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Moses Highsmith". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and somewhat slanted to the right.

[fn p. 73]

To the Honorable William L Marcy Secretary of War

In the communication which I had the honor to address to you, in January last, as an appeal from the Division of the Commissioner of Pensions, in behalf of the Distributees of the late Mrs. Esther Johnson, widow of Colonel Jonas Johnson, for a Pension, I failed to ask for a Pension large enough to cover the services of Colonel Johnson, owing to my unacquaintance with the case. This I discovered, when I returned to North Carolina and had a conference with the Claimants. And this induced me, through the Honorable J. R. J. Daniel, to ask the favor of you to suspend your decision upon the case, until I could have an opportunity better and more fully to state it to you. With your permission I will now proceed to do so.

This case has been acted upon, and allowed by the Commissioner, for 6 months service, rendered by Colonel Jonas Johnson in 1779, immediately preceding his death. He died on the 29th of July 1779, on Drowning Creek in South Carolina [sic, North Carolina] on his march home from that service.

The Provincial Congress of North Carolina, which sat at Hillsboro on the 7th September 1775, passed an Ordinance (see Mr. Secretary Hill's certificate herewith filed) to raise Minute men for six months service. Under that Ordinance, after the battle of Moore's Creek, in February 1776, two companies of Militia were raised in Edgecombe County, to march to Wilmington to suppress the Tories and to oppose the British. According to this ordinance of the Provincial Congress, the two Companies appointed their own captains and inferior officers, subject to the Committee of Safety, who commissioned them. The field Officers were to be commissioned by the Provincial Congress. These two companies were raised, the first of March 1776, one of them was commanded by Captain Henry Irvin Toole, and the other by Captain Hall. Jonas Johnson acted as Major, no doubt, under the authority of the Committee of Safety, who under the Ordinance of the Provincial Congress, had to pass upon, after inspecting the two companies, and give certificates as Commissions to the Captains. No Major, owing to the infancy of the Military Service, in that day, had been appointed for Edgecombe County, by the Congress, the appointing Power. A Major was particularly required for this service, Congress was not in session, and it is fair to suppose, Jonas Johnson received from the Committee of Safety, the appointment of Major, relying, that the Congress would confirm the appointment so soon as they might convene. They convened at Halifax in April 1776, and on the 22nd day of that month they confirmed the appointment of Major Jonas Johnson. On the 19th day of the same month, Major Jonas Johnson, was appointed to collect arms &c., three days before his appointment as Major. (See Mr. Secty Hill's certificate on file). The Parole Testimony – the Depositions of the Micajah Pettaway, Henry Barnhill, John Bryant, Thomas Bentley, prove the Military Service of Major Jonas Johnson, from the 1st of March to October 1776, except Pettaway, he proves only the beginning of the service. Dr. Robert Williams and Mrs. Catherine Johnson, prove in part the same service. The Comptroller of North Carolina certifies (whose certificate is on file) that in a Book of Army settlements & accounts, Colonel Jonas Johnson is associated with Henry Horne, and that they

received for their services, and for the purchase of arms £376.15.5 dated November 1776. Colonel Jonas Johnson as Major was entitled to \$60 per month. From the first of March 2 November 1776 the date of the settlement is 8 months. Eight months pay at \$60, amounts to \$480, equal to £192 leaving a balance of £184.15.5 = Equal to \$370, to pay Henry Horn and for arms. This Record proof of pay, and the Parole Testimony of services by Major Johnson it would seem, should make this part of the case conclusive.

In the Book of Rules and Regulations, laid down by the War Department to govern in Pension cases, at page 92; Governor Cass, then Secretary of War, directs the Commissioner, in case of Peter S Schuyler "that service in a Military Office," (such as Major John Jonas Johnson held from the first of March to the 22nd of April 1776, when his appointment was confirmed by the Provincial Congress) "although the commission may not date back to the commencement of the service, entitles a person to a Pension for such service." To this clear proof of service by Major Johnson, the commission of objects that he could not have marched as Major, because he was not made a Major until 22nd of April 1776, but that he went in a civil capacity to carry arms, which he had been appointed to purchase. Whereas, his appointment to collect arms, was only conferred upon him, on the 19th of April, 3 days before the commission of Major (see Mr. Hill's certificate on file). He objects further to the proofs, because he says it is indispensably necessary, that the service, should be proven by Documentary, or Record evidence, if either can be had, if not, then by the Testimony of at least one credible witness. Here are both kinds of evidence in this case to sustain it. He objects at one time, to Henry Barnhill's evidence, because he stated in his Deposition that Major Jonas Johnson was in the Battle of Moore's Creek. Then he (the Commissioner) admits, in his letter December 8, 1840, he was mistaken in that objection. He objects to the same Testimony, upon the ground, that Barnhill's evidence states he served under Colonel Littlebridge. Barnhill's deposition, does not say Littlebridge, but Lillington, that he served under Colonel Lillington. All the witnesses referred to, are proven by Depositions filed in the case, to be of good Character, and entitled to the fullest credibility. And this proof establishes that Major Johnson served and was paid from the first of March to November 1776, making 8 months. The Comptroller of North Carolina certifies, that Colonel Jonas Johnson was paid in December 1776 \$52.89 in specie for his services, and that in November 1777 £126.9.7 was paid Colonel Jonas Johnson for himself and sundry officers. These 2 last sums would pay him for 4 months service and leave \$143 for the other officers. The Comptroller further certifies that the sum of £126.9.7 was allowed Colonel Johnson by the Council of Safety, as an allowance for claims from April 1776 to May 1779. This sum would pay upwards of \$60 per month for more than 5 months. He further certifies, that in December 1778 £400 was paid Colonel Johnson for expenses in marching his troops to the General Rendezvous. This proves Military service. And he further certifies, that on the 3rd of February 1779, Colonel Jonas Johnson was allowed the sum of \$1,126.37 and that he was paid sundries in February 1779 \$16.45, sums would pay Colonel Jonas Johnson for a Military service of 12 months & more. In March 1779 Colonel Jonas Johnson marched with his Regiment to South Carolina, in which service he died, on the 29th of July 1779, which last service for 6 months, has been allowed by the Commissioner. And in March the 16th 1779 the Comptroller certifies, that Colonel Johnson received the sum of £4,200 pounds, for the pay and bounty of the Drafts and Volunteers of Edgecombe County. And in April \$1,523.22. In March \$2,111.17. This latter sum, would pay Colonel Johnson for military services prior to his going upon the expedition to South Carolina for largely more than a year. The certificate further proves pavement to Colonel Johnson in July of \$524, and that the sum of £400 was allowed Colonel Jonas Johnson to defray the expenses of the troops. All these

monied transactions from a service & a military service, of Colonel Jonas Johnson, almost without intermission, from the first of March 1776, to the 29th of July 1779, the day of his death, on his march home. At all these proofs together, and note their dates, and it does seem most clear, that Colonel Jonas Johnson, served in a Military character, from the first of March 1776 to the 29th of July 1779 the day of his Death by the most reasonable calculation, upwards of 3 years, certainly more than 2 years.

Mr. Commissioner Edwards, admits in his correspondence, that Colonel Johnson was a meritorious officer & Patriot, but that proof was needed to prove their military character. Doctor G. W. Crump acting Commissioner, in his letter of the Instant 7 at War of the 15th of August 1843, when the 6 months was ordered to be allowed by the Secretary at War, to the Widow, states that Major Johnson commanded 2 companies of Militia, in the spring of 1776, as an escort to transport arms to Wilmington. That the length of service is not ascertained; overlooking, that the Parole Testimony in the case, ascertains it, to be from the first of March, to October 1776 & the Record proof of payment, from the first of March to November 1776. Doctor Crump also refers to the letters of Colonel Johnson to Governor Caswell (which I now be the Secretary of War to look at) and the large sums of money according to the certificates of the Comptroller of North Carolina which had just been filed in the Pension Office, he was entrusted with, to pay his Regiment, as well as himself, to prove the Patriotism & services of Colonel Johnson.

It is strange that Commissioner Edwards, and acting Commissioner Crump, should in opposition to the most conclusive Testimony, take up, and maintain it, that Major Jonas Johnson, when marched to Wilmington on the first of March 1776, that he went in a civil capacity, to escort arms. There is no proof in the whole case to establish it. On the contrary the services to collect arms, was only cast upon him, on the 19th of April 1776, by the provincial Congress. The Death of Colonel Johnson in 1779, and the act of Congress granting Pensions having passed in 1836, nearly 60 years thereafter, and the contemporaries of Colonel Johnson, most of them, living in a sickly country, nearly all of them have gone to the Grave, before the law was passed, and now it is believed not one of them lives. Yet no man in North Carolina has left a more Brilliant character, handing down to posterity by Tradition than Colonel Jonas Johnson, for his Military services, his Patriotism, & his activity, in the services of his country, at the expense of his own life & fortune. He was a man of not much educate which makes his own record, the more deficient, but he possessed all the good qualities of great merit & the said soundest patriotism.

The Military Records of North Carolina were so imperfectly kept, that they furnished the poorest evidence of the proud service of her most distinguished sons. And as the Pension Walls are intended, as a reward to patriotism in the way of a bounty, to the widow of a Proud of Officer who prided, and lost his life, in the service of his Country, too much nicety of evidence, should not be required, since all the witnesses are dead. By such requirement, the purposes of the wall will be defeated –. The many proofs, then, in the case of Colonel Johnson, there positive, circumstantial, and diversity of character, when taken in connection, prove the service & the military service he performed, clearly and without the possibility of fraud upon the walls. And that was the great requirement the lawmakers intended, I presume. Any other intention, would defeat itself, by making the offered bounty a same to be struggled for, without the possibility to attain it.

Most of the record proves from the offices of the Comptroller and Secretary of State of North Carolina, all recent, filed since 1843, and the certificates of Mr. Hill, showing the

ordinance of the Provincial Congress to raise Minute men, and how, is now filed for the first time. All of which is most respectfully submitted by

S/ Jno. D. Hawkins,
In behalf of the Distributees of
Mrs. Esther Johnson
widow of Colonel Jonas Johnson

[fn p. 124]

State of North Carolina Secretary of State's Office

Sir

Your letter of 3rd instant was received this morning. The Provincial Congress which met in Hillsboro on the 20th of August 1775, passed an ordinance on this 7th September 1775, directing that minute men should be enlisted for 6 months & that when called into actual service should be subject to and bound by the rules and regulations of the Continental Army, provided by the Continental Congress. In the Journal of the Provincial Congress which met in Halifax on the 4th of April 1776, I see, that I think of April 1776, in making appointments of persons in the different counties in the State, to receive, procure and purchase Fire Arms for the use of the Troops, Jonas Johnston was appointed by Edgecombe County, and on the 22nd of April 1776, Jonas Johnston was appointed 1st Major of the Militia of Edgecombe County, but there is nothing said of his services. There was no Assembly in this State until May 1777.

Very respectfully your Obedient Server

James L. Edwards, Esqr.

S/ Wm Hill

[fn p. 126]

State of North Carolina Secretary of State's Office

I William Hill Secretary of State in and for the State of North Carolina, do hereby certify, that it appears from the Journals of the Provincial Congress which met in the Town of Halifax in this State in 1776, that Henry Horn and Jonas Johnston were appointed by said Congress, to receive, procure and purchase Fire arms for the use of the Troops in service in said State, and that on the 22nd day of April 1776 Jonas Johnston was by the said Provincial Congress appointed 1st Major of Militia in the County of Edgecombe in the State aforesaid.

Given under my hand this 15th of January A.D. 1840

S/ Wm Hill

[fn p. 82]

State of North Carolina Pitt County

The affidavit of John Bryan now a Pensioner of the United States taken to prove the services and death of Colonel Jonas Johnston of Edgecombe County in the War of the Revolution. This affiant being first duly sworn according to law testifies and says. That he first entered the service in the spring of 1776 in the month of March and marched to Wilmington and was there placed in a Regiment under the command of Colonel Lillington Major Jonas Johnston being the Major of the Regiment. I served from March until October of that year at Wilmington under the command of Major Johnston. In the month of March 1779 this affiant marched under the command of Captain James Lanier in a Regiment commanded by Colonel Jonas Johnston for South Carolina and served from that time until the middle of June of that year, at which time we were discharged and on our way home Colonel Johnston died on the way at Squire Armisn [?] on

Drowning Creek near the North Carolina line. This affiant has the most distinct recollection of the services of Colonel Johnston and his bravery at the Battle of Stono. We were discharged but a short time after the Battle and this affiant shall never forget his saying to us that he should never get home being then sick.

Given under my hand this 28th day of March 1840

S/ John Bryan

[fn p. 85]

State of North Carolina, Pitt County

The affidavit of Thomas Bentley a Citizen of Pitt County and now a Pensioner of the United States taken to prove the Revolutionary services of Colonel Jonas Johnston of Edgecombe County. This affiant being first duly sworn according to law testifies and says. That he was drafted in the month of March 1776 and marched for Wilmington under the command of Captain Godfrey Stincell [sic, Godfrey Stancil ?] and served in and near that place until the month of October - when we arrived at Wilmington we were put in a Regiment commanded by Colonel Lillington Major Jonas Johnston being the Major of the Regiment I continued to serve under Major Johnston until we were discharged in October as above stated. Major Johnston being in service all the time. After that this affiant was mustered into service as a 12 months man under Captain McRee and marched to South Carolina. This affiant well recollects hearing of the death of Colonel Johnston the period when it took place he is unable to say as he was not been under his command.

Given under my hand this 26th day of March 1840.

S/ Thomas Bentley

[fn p. 198]

State of North Carolina, Pitt County

The amended affidavit of Henry Barnhill made to explain and prove more fully his knowledge of the Revolutionary services of Colonel Jonas Johnston. This affiant being first duly sworn according to law, testifies and says. That as stated in his formal affidavit he marched from Greenville to Wilmington and served in or near that place for 6 months viz. from about the 15th of March 1776 to the first of October in the same year. On our reaching Wilmington we were mustered into a Regiment commanded by Colonel Lillington, and Jonas Johnston as Major. We were stationed in Wilmington and in the month of May we were ordered and marched forth Smithvill [Smithville?] the mouth of the Cape Fear where the enemy had landed Major Jonas Johnston commanded the detachment; and I served under him at Smithville and between that place & Wilmington all the month of May & June 1776. Certainly 2 months. I was as before stated in the same Regiment with him for the 6 months I served at Wilmington in near it and I know he served as long as I did viz. 6 months. In my former affidavit by have said served a part of the time under Major Johnston; and sayings so I had reference to the 2 months service performed under his immediate command. Captain James Armstrong commanded the company to which I was attached.

Given under my hand this 16th day of November 1840

S/ Henry Barnhill

[fn p. 225 is a letter Mrs. Johnston's heirs' attorney wrote to President James Polk pleading her case.]

[fn p. 235]

State of North Carolina, Edgecombe County

The affidavit of Captain Micajah Pettaway taken to prove more fully his knowledge of the service and death of Colonel Jonas Johnston in the War of the Revolution. This affiant being first duly sworn testifies and says Immediately after the Battle of Moore's Creek in the latter end of the month of February 1776 a draft was made of two companies of men from Edgecombe County to March to Wilmington then threatened by the enemy. The company in which I was drafted was commanded by Captain Henry Irvin Tool, and the other by Captain Hall. The 2 companies comprised about 180 to 200 men. We marched under the command of Major Jonas Johnston and carried with us several wagons of ammunition, on our arrival at Wilmington the men under the command of Major Johnston together with those from other counties were formed into a Regiment and Colonel Lillington was made Colonel and Major Johnston acted as major: we were from the first of March to the first of April stationed in Wilmington and from that time to the first or 10th of May stationed at a camp below Wilmington on the Cape Fear River and at that time I enlisted under Captain Brinkly of the 3rd Regiment: and left Major Johnston at the camp and in a few days after marched to South Carolina first to Georgetown then to Charleston and then to Savannah, and remained until the month of October when we were ordered to return and joined General Washington to the North. We marched back through South & North Carolina and on reaching Tarborough, we halted for a few days; to recover from the fatigue of the journey and enlist men. I well recollect that Colonel Johnston had a parade of his Regiment to beat up for recruits and to all his appeals to the man to enlist I know that he was constantly answered that they had but a few days returned from serving him 6 months at Wilmington and could not be expected to leave home again immediately. The few who did enlist I often heard speak of the services at Wilmington under Major: afterwards Colonel Johnston, and that I had returned home almost as soon as they did -- From these facts I am as well convinced of Colonel Johnston's serving in and near Wilmington for 6 months as I can be of any fact whatever. That I served under him for 2 months before my enlistment I can positively of firm as true. I cannot name the day we left Tarborough but I well know it was immediately after the Battle of Moore's Creek for we met on the way the prisoners taken and that Battle on their way to Halifax, from that time to the first of May I was under the command of Major Johnston in and near Wilmington. This affiant served in the Army under the command of General Washington up to the very last of the month of October 1778 when he was discharged at a place called the Orchard about 10 miles from West Point in the State of Connecticut. He then returned home and recollects well as stated in his formal affidavit the service and death of Colonel Johnston in South Carolina.

Given under my hand this 4th day of March 1840.

S/ Micajah Pettaway

[fn p. 243]

State of North Carolina, Edgecombe County

The affidavit of Micajah Pettaway a Citizen of the County above written and a Pensioner of the United States now in the 79th year of his age. This affiant being first duly sworn according to law testifies and says that he was born and raised in the County of Edgecombe and in the year 1776 in the month of February he was drafted and marched from Tarboro with a detachment of men commanded by Colonel Jonas Johnston for Wilmington with ammunition for that place -- and on reaching it I enlisted under Captain Brinkley of the 3rd Regiment and shortly after this in April of that year marched for Charleston South Carolina then threatened by the

enemy -- Colonel Johnston was then acting as a Major: and remained stationed between Wilmington and Smithville the mouth of the Cape Fear River and in the fall of 1776 I was marched through North Carolina on my way to the North and at that time Colonel Johnston had returned to Edgecombe County in what was made Colonel of the County. This affiant was in the Army under General Washington until the fall of 1778 and was discharged in the month of October on his return home he still found Colonel Johnston actively employed in suppressing the Tories; and in the month of February 1779 Colonel Johnston marched with his Regiment to South Carolina and served up to the period of his death which took place in July on Drowning Creek at the House of Mr. Amis near the North & South Carolina line. In conclusion he can testify that Colonel Johnston served in the expedition to Wilmington 6 months and from February 1779 up to his death in July of that year and South Carolina. This affiant also knows that Colonel Johnston was not only married but at the time of his death he left 5 children whom this affiant has lived near from that time to the present and in conclusion he testifies that Mrs. Esther Johnston now applying for a Pension was his lawful wife; and to his knowledge has never married.

S/ Micajah Pettaway

[fn p. 247]

State of North Carolina, Pitt County

The affidavit of Doctor Robert Williams of Pitt County now a Pensioner of the United States and the late a Surgeon in the War of the Revolution. This affiant being first duly sworn according to law testifies and says. That at an early period of his life viz. -- as early as the year 1771 or 72 he well knew Colonel Jonas Johnston of Edgecombe County and at the commencement of the Revolution Colonel Johnston was a conspicuous man both in a civil and military capacity which he continued to do up to the period of his death while on an expedition to South Carolina.

This affiant can testify to the following facts in relation to the marriage of Colonel Johnston's and the service he rendered as Colonel of Edgecombe County in the War of the revolution. This affiant having lived all his life except 2 years at Windsor and 3 years at Greenville in 10 miles of the widow of Colonel Johnston -- first I am fully convinced from my knowledge of facts connected with the history of that period that Colonel Jonas Johnston whose widow is now applying for a pension is the identical person known to this affiant as the wife of Colonel Jonas Johnston as early as the year 1771 or 72 and that he was in the practice of physick and surgery under and with his father before the commencement of the Revolution in the neighborhood of Colonel Jonas Johnston; In the early part of the year 1779 or 80 Colonel Jonas Johnston marched from Edgecombe County in command of a detachment of man to South Carolina and in that expedition Colonel Johnston died in service. The precise period of the commencement or termination of the service of Colonel Johnston this affiant is unable at this time unable to state. But he is satisfied it was either in the year 1779 or 80 and terminated in his death. From the period of Colonel Johnston's death up to the present time this affiant has known Mrs. Johnston and his children who are 5 in number. This affiant can testify that Mr. Micajah Pettaway of Edgecombe County was a soldier of the Revolution in his testimony in the opinion of this affiant is entitled to the fullest credit and belief -- and is also that of Mrs. Catherine Johnston of the same County.

Given under my hand this 25th day of November 1839.

S/ Robert Williams

Robt Williams